DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 116 699 IR 002 948

AUTHOR Britton, Helen Ann
TITLE Sex Role Stereotyping: A Content Analysis of Bread and Butterflies.
PUB DATE Jun 75
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Instruction; *Content Analysis; Course Content; *Educational Television; *Elementary Education; Females; Instructional Media; Sex Discrimination; Sex Role; *Sex Stereotypes; Telecourses; Womens Studies; Working Women
IDENTIFIERS Agency for Instructional Television; *Bread and Butterflies

ABSTRACT

A 15 program instructional television series on career awareness, "Bread and Butterflies" was produced by the Agency for Instructional Television in 1974-75. Designed to be an affective stimulus in the classroom, the series was analyzed to document how women were portrayed and the extent to which stereotyping occurred in the work roles shown. Five categories of common sex roles were established: (1) female job ghetto; (2) male career domain; (3) woman in a man's job; (4) man in a woman's job; and (5) nonsexist career presentation (a job or career in which the skill required is the main criteria for doing it). The characters were analyzed both in terms of the jobs they were shown doing and the context in which they were shown. In terms of the amount of time each category was shown, over one-third of the characters portrayed in nonsexist roles were from one program, and only one program focuses on a character who was portrayed in a nonsexist way. It was found that no woman was portrayed as competently and confidently doing her job in a leadership position. Also, while many nonsexist role models were briefly portrayed in the series, in terms of the context in which women are shown, little was done to break down commonly held stereotypes of women and men in the work world. (HB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED116699

SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS

OF

BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Helen Ann Britton

IR000944

Introduction

In recent years textbooks and other instructional materials have gained much in social awareness. The racial and social backgrounds reflected by the role models presented have been expanded beyond the white-middle class suburban family unit. The child of a minority race can now expect to find successful representatives of his own people in the more up-to-date materials, and thus is taught that ability does not depend upon skin color. Unfortunately while racial biases are disappearing, sexual biases are not.

Children's educations reflect the roles that society intends them ultimately to occupy. The instructional materials play an important part in defining the dimensions that are considered possible for most children in how they project themselves into future adult roles. This psychological identification process that occurs with textbook and literature role models becomes even more important when the use of role models in television drama is considered. Much research has been done, most notably, the "Surgeon General's Report on Television Violence" on how children learn from and identify with television drama characters. While researchers dispute exactly how this psychological identification occurs, few would doubt that to some extent it does.

It has often been said that the power of the medium of television is that of identification with the situation and the characters involved in an intense situation. The use of dramatic situation as a vehicle for instruction is a fairly new concept in instructional television. Indeed, this concept has tapped the most effective attribute of media for learning.

The Agency for Instructional Television in Bloomington, Indiana, has used this concept for the past five years. Along with going to the consortium effort, or having several educational agencies pool their money and their talents with AIT coordinating the efforts, several high quality instructional television series have been produced.

The first series produced under this plan, emphasizing affective education rather than cognitive skills, is RIPPLES, an early childhood education series. This series is seen on local public school television schedules today. INSIDE/OUT, a highly sensitive thirty-program series for mental/emotional health received wide acclaim; indeed, it won the national Emmy award for children's television in 1974. It, too, is seen on local instructional television stations.

The latest series from AIT, the subject of this content analysis, is entitled BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES. BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES is a career development instructional television series designed for nine to twelve year-old students. The series consists of fifteen 15-minute programs and is currently being shown on open-circuit instructional television stations in the United States and Canada.

The teacher's guide for BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES lists eight specific goals for the series. It states that full implementation of BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES will help students:

1. Develop clearer, more positive understanding of self- their interests, abilities, values, and interpretations of the events in their lives.
2. Exert greater control over their lives through decision-making and planning.
3. Develop personal and interpersonal skills and attitudes essential to success in school and work.
4. Develop greater respect for other people and the work they do.
5. Develop a clearer concept of successful work behavior- the attitudes, skills, and responsibilities demonstrated by successful people at school and at work.

6. Develop skills necessary to gather, process, and act upon information about self in relation to a constantly changing work environment.

7. Relate their immediate experiences and decisions to their evolving career development.

8. See the connection between school and the real world; understand the relationship between what they learn in school and the problems and activities outside the school.

According to the manual, these broad goals are reflected with varying emphasis throughout the fifteen lessons, but certain concepts within the goals are highlighted in each lesson. The programs offer brief dramatized versions of the key concepts. The characters in these dramatic situations provide an important and effective source of role models for children viewing this series and studying career development.

My content analysis is designed to document in a systematic way to what extent and in what context sex role stereotyping is present in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES.

Methodology

Of the fifteen programs from BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES, the following titles were viewed:

Treasure Hunt (Self-Independence and the Economic System)
Work Means (Why People Work)
Me, Myself & Maybe (Self-Clarification)
Decisions, Decisions (Decision-Making)
School & Jobs (Relationship -- School, Work, and Society)
I Agree...You're Wrong! (Interpersonal Skills)
Success Story (What is Success?)
The Way We Live (Life Styles)
Planning Ahead: The Racer (Shaping One's Destiny)
Things, Ideas, People (People at Work)
Power Play (Power and Influence)
Choosing Changes (Freedom to Hope, to Choose, and to Change).

The three missing titles were not viewed because they are not available at KTEH-TV, Channel 54, San Jose, California, where the viewing took place.

In establishing a system to classify the role models according to their gender presentation in this series, five categories of common sex roles are established:

I. Female job ghetto (consists of secretaries, store clerks, nursing, elementary school teaching, domestic work, etc.)

II. Male career domain (business management, doctor, lawyer, architect, engineer, sales, self-employment, mechanical/manual labor)

III. Woman in a man's job

IV. Man in a woman's job

V. Nonsexist career presentation (a job or career in which the skill required is the main criteria for doing it).

The characters are categorized not just in terms of the job they are doing, but also the context in which they are shown is taken into account.

It should be noted that only the adults are included in the classification because most of the child role models are not shown in a clear job or career roles. Also, many times the children shown are looking to the adults in the drama for advice, guidance, or modeling behaviors. In terms of considering how students' psychological identification and projection of themselves into the future is based on what they see presented in the BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES programs, it is safe to assume that the learner will most likely identify with the adults for projection purposes.

According to Ruth Pollack, a producer and writer for several of the programs in the series, AIT believes that the most successful programs are those that use mainly children models in them. While this may be true, still the adult role models presented in the programs are their models for future occupations.

Also, it must be remembered that the categorization process involves some value judgments by the person performing the task. Such classification necessarily calls for a value judgment, but, hopefully, the judgment is based on an awareness and logic rather than on biases.

Analysis

Treasure Hunt (Self-Independence and the Economic System). The main characters in this program are children. They do perform some jobs for

money, but they are really not engaged in a life's career track. They are classified as nonsexist because they perform a job they can do to earn money (Ernie washes dogs and Monica makes art objects to sell).

Work Means (Why People Work). This program is a montage of people performing jobs and telling what they like about their job and why. A song points out that what children like to do often becomes the work they do as adults. A split screen technique shows a child's hobby or interest with an adult job possibility that may result from the hobby/interest.

The adults shown were sometimes difficult to classify. One interesting point was when a woman's voice is describing talking about what being an architect means to her; the visual is two men in hard hats at a construction site looking at some drawings. The woman welder is shown at the beginning of the program, but when scenes of the factory are later shown, the woman is obviously not part of their group routine.

Me, Myself, and Maybe (Self-Clarification). The main character in this program, Kathy, a young black woman who moves to a new job and a new city, stays with her brother's family while she looks for an apartment. In the few days she stays at her brother's, she befriends her niece, Deanne. While Kathy is shown as an attractive, intelligent person, her job is a personnel interviewer, traditionally a woman's job. She is concerned about her appearance on the job and is slightly embarrassed on her first day there because she is over dressed. She is sewing in her room after work, when Deanne asks her if her fellow workers laughed at her for being overdressed. The message that Kathy gives Deanne is an important one--that it is important to try even though you may risk failure, but trying is the only way to find out if you like something or not.

Decisions, Decisions (Decision-Making). Tommy's mother is the main adult role model portrayed in this program. She is presented as an

intelligent person who asks Tommy to consider the outcome of his own decisions and advises him to make decisions that he can live with. She is shown doing only housework.

School & Jobs (Relationship -- School, Work, and Society). This program is a montage of people performing their jobs and telling about various aspects of their jobs. A woman doctor (surgeon) is shown preparing and performing surgery. Most of the program seems to portray quite traditional gender presentations, especially toward the end of the program when the nurses are shown grouped together and the factory workers are segregated by sex. In the ending scene where the workers are shown walking away from their place of work, the men factory workers are in a group and the female nurses are in a group. A strong message here is that women and men are segregated in their work roles.

I Agree...You're Wrong! (Interpersonal Skills). The two main characters presented in this program are both unfortunate personalities. They do not listen to each other and upset the whole work crew with their arguing. Mattie is the director and Vince is the cameraman. Mattie and Vince argue over which shots will work. While Mattie theoretically is the boss, Vince shows no respect for her position as director. Mattie's inability to get along with others makes her incompetent in her leadership position. She seems more concerned with her "role" than with just doing the job. Ideally, a leader should learn to massage people and extract the best from creative types. Mattie is definitely not a very attractive role model for young girls to aspire.

Success Story (What is Success?). Dave Gilbert is probably the most aware, sensitive person presented in the series. As a young man his interest in art and drawing is discounted first by his father (who thinks that you have to be busy at work all the time or you are lazy), then by

his peers in junior high and high school. Dave discovers himself when he is drafted into the army and must leave his post office job behind. After mastering several new skills in the army, Dave returns home, but not to the same old humdrum existence. He decides to determine his own fate. He works hard to establish his own leather shop, which symbolizes independence for him. While the important other people put down his interest in art early in his life as either lazy or sissy, he returns to his inner felt talents and develops them in a way that make his career fulfilling. He is definitely a very positive role model for men, specifically black men.

The Way We Live (Life Styles). The West Virginia family presents a most stereotyped presentation of the traditional family. The father works in a factory as a welder; the mother is shown doing housework, saying that taking care of a family is a full time job. She goes to town twice a week to teach nursing assistance. The father and son have an active relationship; they are shown hunting, shooting arrows and making miniature animals from steel tubing. The daughter is shown only at the dinner table and at the Saturday night musical. She is nondescript in the program, while all other family members express how they feel about living in the country. The Cochran family is a nonsexist gender presentation, especially when the little girl is shown playing the violin (fiddle) so well along with the rest of the family.

Planning Ahead: The Racer (Shaping One's Destiny). Johnny's father and uncle help him to earn money and to build a model racer to enter in the school race. The adults provide very traditional models for Johnny (his uncle owns a gas station and is a mechanic), and they take an interest in his development and help him to learn about building cars. A positive role for boys is presented.

Things, Ideas & People (People at Work). The father is an airline pilot and is talking to his wife about a friend who is released from his job, when the children overhear and think it is their father who is fired. They want to help him to find a job so they begin to classify possible jobs he would be interested in according to the categories of things, ideas and people. The children each take a category and begin to fantasize him in the various roles they think of; he is fantasized as a chemical researcher who invents a cure for the common cold, a motorcycle test driver (the teenage daughter is shown rather ludicrously as a motorcyclist), and a teacher, not just any teacher but a very popular college professor at a famous university. When they confront their father and learn that it is his friend, and not he, who needs a job, they offer their lists to the friend. It is interesting that it is never suggested that the mother could work or contribute to the family income; she is shown as a housewife.

Power Play (Power and Influence). While the teachers are the only adults shown even briefly in this program and the children are not shown in definite jobs or careers, one comment from the program is important in terms of this analysis. When a girl is elected as the leader, the comment "she's only a girl" is made by a fellow boy student in the room. This is hardly within the realm of breaking down stereotypes and commonly held myths about girls (and later women) in leadership roles.

Choosing Changes (Freedom to Hope, to Choose and to Change). Barbara is probably the most interesting and accomplished person dealt with in any length in the series. She is an ocean engineer for NOVA where she is the boss over a group of workers who test equipment which is used in the ocean. Barbara begins by telling us that her whole career was a gamble -- it was a terrible risk, there are few women in the field, she had to be better than men in order to succeed.

She wants to conduct an actual test in the ocean instead of using the simulated environments in the laboratory. When she asks her boss about the project, he tells her that she can expect no support from him, there is no money in the budget for experiments. Besides, she doesn't even know how to deep sea dive. She is afraid of failure but tries the experiment anyway. Even her colleagues give her no support because it is too big a change from the way they are used to doing things. She is nervous because she has to convince her boss and co-workers that she is capable of doing the project. In carrying out the underwater experiment, she again expresses her feelings of failure and fear of failure. Her male co-workers in the underwater laboratory don't seem to be dealing with their fears if they have any. After the project is successfully completed, Barbara says that she took on the almost impossible to prove that she is a first rate ocean engineer. Only at the completion of the experiment does she speak of gaining the respect of her fellow workers.

I question whether Barbara is really a healthy role model for young girls. Can women realistically expect to successfully do the near impossible before they can consider themselves to be "first rate" or even competent? Or must they always perform a feat to feel good about themselves or to gain the respect of colleagues? I question whether most men could stand up under such strain and pressure in their jobs.

Also, it is a commonly held stereotype that professional women have many fears and insecurities. It is not commonly said that men have many of the same fears and insecurities. While Barbara is, indeed, an exceptional person, the context in which she is shown tends to reinforce stereotypes for women, rather than erase them.

Conclusions

Based on this analysis, the figures for the job categories are:

I. 14
II. 35
III. 4
IV. 2
V. 23.

While the sheer numbers indicate that many nonsexist role models are portrayed in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES, looking at the series in terms of the context in which women are placed leads me to believe that little is done to break down commonly held stereotypes of women in the work world. Most important, not one single woman is portrayed as competently and confidently doing her job in a leadership position.

Aside from a head count of characters in categories, another important aspect of the impact of media is that of time. The sheer amount of time given to a character or a category of characters is a factor which determines emphasis. While no detailed clocking of every character in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES computed in terms of categories is available, a cursory look at the programs and the categories in terms of time is important.

Over one-third of characters portrayed in nonsexist roles are from one film, Work Means (Why People Work). Only one film shows all the major characters in nonsexist roles (Treasure Hunt), but that includes only child work roles, not adult jobs.

Only one program focuses on a character who is shown in a nonsexist way, Dave Gilbert in Success Story. Schools & Jobs again is a montage of scenes where little time is devoted to any one character. The Cochran family in The Way We Live have more time devoted to them, but they are not the focus of the program.

From this brief consideration of the time devoted to nonsexist roles, it appears that little emphasis is given to nonsexist role portrayals in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES.

According to Roslyn S. Willett ("Working in a Man's World, The Woman Executive", in Gornick, Vivian, and Moran, Barbara K., Woman in Sexist Society), relationships between women and men are characterized by certain themes. One of them is women's poor image of themselves. "Believing themselves to be lesser, smaller, more passive, weaker, more trivial, incapable of coping with men and other women as equals, incapable of taking hold of a job, they behave as if they are this way and then get confirmation from others of their own beliefs. Among other myths held about women who work are that women cannot really do big jobs, that women are not creative, and that women in offices, government and industry should hold those jobs closest to housekeeping and a wife's duties. Men feel that most women, in helping a man "do his thing", derive their satisfaction and feeling of being needed. Also, any woman who does big jobs, is creative, and is successful must either be a hard, nasty bitch or must be sleeping with a guy who put her where she is."

Too many stereotypes are reinforced in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES. Certainly it is not intentional. The producers are not consciously conspiring to keep females out of programs or to show them unfavorably, but stereotypes do get in the way.

Perhaps in the attempt to offer children a "normal" world they confuse what is actually normal with what is simply most apparent. We like to imagine that each child lives in a two-parent household, and by taking this as a norm, we forget it often is not so. It is an everyday event to see a mother in the kitchen, but that is not necessarily the only feature of a mother's existence.

Girls are not so much told that they cannot do something as not told they can. And, if in spite of all, a girl does decide to tackle a traditionally male profession, others are more likely to discourage her than to offer support.

Matilda Butler-Paisley, at the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, has classified five levels of consciousness in how women are treated in advertising: (1) woman as sex objects, (2) keeping women in their place, or women can be competent in "woman's work" but must not aspire to move beyond well defined boundaries, (3) women can have two places, or they may have a career as long as they are superwomen who can also take care of housework, (4) men and women are equal -- this usually translates to women must become like men to be accepted into the fold, and (5) the individual alone is considered.

Category I, "female job ghetto", roughly corresponds to level two consciousness in Butler-Paisley's scheme. Category III, "woman in a man's job", roughly corresponds to level three or four consciousness, and Category V, "nonsexist career presentation", to consciousness level five. Clearly, according to these levels of consciousness, both men and women are generally portrayed as "roles" rather than focusing on individual abilities in BREAD AND BUTTERFLIES.

Quite simply, education should direct and inspire the individual to make the highest use of his or her particular abilities. Yet in the case of women, we seem to forget this obvious fact.

PROGRAM Choosing Changes (Freedom to Hope, to Choose, and to Change)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male carcer domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Barbara			x		
Barbara's boss		x			
Director of hydra lab		x			
Divers (2)		xx			
TOTAL		4	1		

PROGRAM Things, Ideas, People
(People at Work)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Father (airplane pilot)		x			
Mother (housewife)	x				
TOTAL	1	1			

PROGRAM Planning Ahead: The Racer
(Shaping One's Destiny)

CHARACTERS / CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Uncle Bill (mechanic)		x			
Teacher (female)	x				
Johnny's father		x			
TOTAL	1	2			

PROGRAM The Way We Live (Life Styles)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Father		x			
Mother	x				
Father Cochran family					x
Son Cochran family					x
Daughter Cochran family					x
TOTAL	1	1			3

PROGRAM Success Story (What is Success?)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Dave Gilbert					x
Dave's father		x			
TOTAL		1			1

PROGRAM I Agree, You're Wrong (Interpersonal Skills)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Vince		x			
Mattie			x		
Brian					x
Dewey					x
TOTAL		1	1		2

PROGRAM School & Jobs (Relationship -- School, Work, and Society)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Doctors		x			
Butcher		x			
Salesman		x			
Nurses	x				
Store clerk	x				
Airplane factory workers		x			
TOTAL	6	10		1	4

PROGRAM School & Jobs (Relationship -- School, Work, and Society)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Math teacher				x	
Store owner		x			
Doctor					x
Factory worker (welder)					x
Store clerk	x				
Language arts teacher	x				
Factory worker		x			
Store owner		x			
Nurse	x				
Factory management		x			
Medical researcher					x
Doctor (pediatrician)		x			
Nurse's aid					x
Nurses	x				
Factory workers		x			

(continued on next page)

PROGRAM Decisions, Decisions (Decision-Making)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Tommy's mother	x				
Teacher				x	
TOTAL	1			1	

PROGRAM Me, Myself & Maybe (Self-Clarification)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Teacher	x				
Mother	x				
Personnel interviewer (Kathy)	x				
TOTAL	3				

PROGRAM Work Means (Why People Work)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Physical therapist					x
Engineer (oil drill)		x			
Air controller		x			
Photographer					x
Chemist					x
Basketball pro		x			
Movers		x			
Drummer					x
Policeman		x			
Tennis teacher					x
Taxi driver					x
TOTAL	1	15	2		9

PROGRAM Work Means (Why People Work)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
1st man		x			
2nd man		x			
Woman worker			x		
3rd man		x			
Basketball player		x			
Carpenter		x			
Airplane engineer		x			
Truck driver		x			
Actor (2)					xx
Singer					x
Doctor veterinarian		x			
Electronic engineer		x			
Architect			x		
Lawyer		x			
Librarian	x				

(continued on next page)

PROGRAM Treasure Hunt (Self-Independence and the Economic System)

CHARACTERS \ CATEGORIES	I. Female job ghetto	II. Male career domain	III. Woman in a man's job	IV. Man in a woman's job	V. Nonsexist career
Ernie					x
Monica					x
Monica'a sister					x
TOTAL					3